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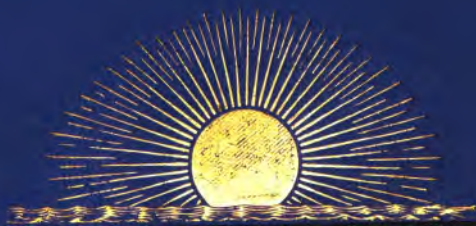
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·THE·HOUR·OF·DEATH·

H. O. F.





THE HOUR OF DEATH.

THE
HOUR OF DEATH
AND
THE INVISIBLE WORLD:

A Collection of Opinions and Facts.

By H. O. F.

“And with the morn, those angel faces smile,
That I have loved long since, and lost awhile.”

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PREFACE. .

It is obvious that very much of the matter contained in a Work like the present must be derived from a great variety of sources, and consequently numerous extracts from the Works and Writings of various Authors are made and acknowledged.

H. O. F.

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THE HOUR OF DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

MAN'S DEPARTURE.

"Our wasting lives grow shorter still,
As months and days increase ;
And every beating pulse we tell
Leaves but the number less.

"The year rolls round, and steals away
The breath that first it gave ;
Whate'er we do, whate'er we be,
We're travelling to the grave."

WHEN a man is about to travel in a far and unknown country, he studies, with profound attention, the impressions produced on other travellers by even distant views of that land to which he is going to journey. He strives to

obtain the best information as to the course he ought to pursue ; and, if he is a wise man, he endeavours to enter into the spirit and follow the route of those who, as they approached it, have seen glorious prospects, delicious landscapes, and beautiful inhabitants.

Thousands are daily crossing the stream which divides time from eternity. One by one, our dearest friends are being numbered with the departed. Some believers have, during the hour of death, seen and heard things unutterable.

Can we not gather up a few faint echoes of that heavenly music which sounded in their ears ? May we not try to present to our mind's vision, be it but through a glass darkly, glimpses of that promised land, seen by those who

have climbed nigh to where Moses stood? May we not endeavour to record, for man's profit, words uttered by those beginning to feel an eternal weight of glory?

Death brings character to the test. A man's spirit needs great support when it is being unclothed. Many delusions may be dissipated by observing the end of those who fear God, and of those who fear Him not.

We must set out, however, with the assumption that it is impossible for us to see clearly the things which are hidden from us by God. A certain limit is fixed for us when in the flesh, and beyond this we cannot reach. "For now we see in a mirror darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I have been known."

And this is in accordance with the words of our Lord when He says, "Where I go thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Shakespeare when speaking of death says :—

"To die ? to sleep ?

To sleep ! perchance to dream ; ay, there's the rub :
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause."

And Dean Goulburn in his "Thoughts on Personal Religion" says : — "It is an old tale how death is miniaturized in sleep. Both are a lying down shrouded in a darkened chamber, where the stir of life is hushed, and the light of life does not penetrate ; and from both there will be an awaking."

Dr. A. Tholuck in his "Hours of

Christian Devotion" says :—"What is pale death? Is it the dark wall at which every traveller must stop, and—sink? Is it sleep undisturbed by dreams? Or is it the dark wall on the other side of which begins the Holy Land? The fleeting moment, the short bridge, on which the brief sleep of time meets the long waking of eternity?"

The Rev. E. L. Hull in his "Sermons" says :—"The moment comes when the earth recedes, and we must go forth alone from the known to the unknown; alone on that mysterious sea, o'er whose dusky margin the mists are hanging, and on whose hidden shores we know not what surges are beating. It is this loneliness and this mystery, this ignorance of what death really is, for we can only see its out-

ward signs, which makes our physical nature shudder."

The ancient Egyptians, oppressed by this feeling, endeavoured to console themselves by taking great thought for the preservation of their bodies after death, and for their safe keeping in lonely magnificence. And this is exhibited in their splendid sarcophagi and wonderful Pyramids.

Mr. Robert Ferguson, in "The Shadow of the Pyramid," thus speaks of the Great Pyramid and its Builder:—

"Yes ! yon stern lines do but embody one,
One stern, unchanging, omnipresent thought,
That dwelt a deadly incubus upon
The Builder's soul, and in his nature wrought ;
With giant efforts all his life he sought
To fling the fearful burden from his mind,
And left at last in visible shape behind
Its type, this load, the heaviest ever brought
By man upon the weary earth to press.

.
He looked—he saw a gulf, how drear and dark—
He heard the roar of an unfathomed sea—
The sound seemed angry—Lo ! the mighty ark—
Through life his refuge he ordained to be,
When on the dark wave of futurity
He should be cast—alone in that stern tomb—
Fit resting place for tyrants such as he,
Alone in safety—not a friend finds room—
.

Not without awe the giant fort we scan,
Its only garrison—one lone dead man !”

Dean Church in “Human Life and its Conditions” says :—“Surely it would be one of the strangest things, were it not so certain, how imperfectly we recognise the gulf which separates us from the future, and the little we know of it. We talk freely, as if it was a region of knowledge, or of possible discovery ; and yet if we think, who can even imagine what he himself will be a

century hence? And what will all the generations of those who have lived be doing; what will be their conditions and their employments in the great years to come beyond the grave?"

The Rev. J. R. Macduff, writing on "A Solemn Question," namely, "How long have I to live?" says:—"Life is now before most of us, with its bright plans and phantom visions—its rainbow-hues and air-castles. Many have no eyes to see the end of that glowing perspective—the close of the avenue, which at present is overarched with the green boughs of hope. But as we go on the distance sensibly diminishes; our consciousness becomes more and more vivid that the end is nearing, and we feel that we are passing, like the millions that have preceded us, to the 'long home.'"

The Rev. E. L. Hull in his "Sermons" says:—"In the hours of sickness, when the sands of life are ebbing, and we catch the nearer murmurs of the eternal sea ; in hours of thought, when the world seems only a painted vision, ready to vanish and disclose the invisible, then we look onwards, and try to realise what *we* shall be when all this is gone."

He further says :—

"We cannot always be gazing into the future, and the heavenly beauty of which we dream contrasts strangely with the labour of the present. When we do look up from our earthly toil, the gleaming worlds of the future appear awfully far away, and death seems to be a gate leading 'across the wilds that no man knows.' You who have looked thoughtfully on the faces

of the dead must have felt this. The still repose of the earthly form brings the mystery near, and makes the dividing gulf seem wide indeed, between the glare and noise of time, and the celestial ministries of the eternal world."

Bishop Ryle in his "Expository Thoughts" says:—"Who that has ever seen the dead can forget the stillness, the silence, the coldness, when the breath has left the body? Who can forget the awful feeling that a mighty change has taken place, and a mighty gulf been placed between ourselves and the departed?"

St. James speaking of life says:—"It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." And of "life's short day" it has been beautifully said by Mrs. Alexander—

“The roseate hues of early dawn,
The brightness of the day,
The crimson of the sunset sky,
How fast they fade away !”

Death, however, comes unexpectedly to most of people, and our own experience reminds many of us of cases where we have clearly observed the fragile and exhausted frame, the weak and difficult utterance, the painful cough, the wearied limbs, the far-away look about the expression and the eyes of friends and acquaintances.

We have seen the stamp of death fixed upon them, and yet they have been found lingering on to the last, with sanguine hopes and expectations of ultimate recovery.

The uncertainty of life has in all ages been a favourite theme for poets, but this great truth has never been

stated in more striking and beautiful language, than in the following verses by Mrs. Hemans, who says :—

“Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set ; but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death !

“Day is for mortal care,
Eve for glad meetings round the joyous hearth,
Night for the dreams of sleep, the voice of prayer ;
But all for thee, thou mightiest of the earth.

“We know when moons shall wane,
When summer-birds from far shall cross the sea,
When autumn's hue shall tinge the golden grain ;
But who shall teach us when to look for thee ?

“Thou art where billows foam,
Thou art where music melts upon the air,
Thou art around us in our peaceful home ;
And the world calls us forth, and thou art there.

“Thou art where friend meets friend,
Beneath the shadow of the elm to rest ;
Thou art where foe meets foe, and trumpets rend
The skies, and swords beat down the princely crest.

“Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set ; but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death !”



CHAPTER II.

STATE OF THE SAVED.

“What is life ? 'tis but a vapour,
Soon it vanishes away ;
Life is like a dying taper,
Ah, my soul ! why wish to stay ;
Why not stretch thy wings and fly
Straight to yonder world of joy.”

THERE is something in the mind of man which is always looking forward to the future, and which pictures to itself an enjoyment to which, in reality, it never may attain. And this feeling proves that the soul is capable of a nobler and a higher satisfaction than it ever can obtain in its intercourse with the world. Its aspirations, unbounded

by time, shew that it is destined for immortality.

Mankind have in all ages been striving for more knowledge on this grand subject; they have been curious to find out the state of the spirit in the hour of death, and after its departure; they have been anxious to divine what may be its capacity, where its abode.

Isaac Taylor in his "Physical Theory of Another Life" remarks, that "everything belonging to human nature is mysterious, or rather bespeaks the existence of powers and instincts *undeveloped*; and which, though they just indicate their presence, do not reach their apparent end in the present state."

The Rev. E. L. Hull in his "Sermons" says:—"All men whose thoughts soar above the conventionalities of existence, through the power of a great

and holy purpose, which has grown into a master-passion, have ever felt that the earthly life cramps and confines their aspirations. Such men always find that their endeavours are too high to be realized here. The world looks coldly on their earnestness, and is indifferent to the good they would accomplish, or it cannot understand their thoughts, and calls them dreams. They discover that no great aim can really be fulfilled in time, and then they pant and pine for a nobler sphere of being."

The ancient Greeks had the same word *ψυχη* for "the soul" and for "a butterfly," which, after its wonderful coming forth from the chrysalis, has always been a favourite emblem of man's spirit joined to his resurrection body.

And Isaac Taylor in his "Physical

Theory of Another Life" says :—"There may be, as in fact we assume that there are, the strongest physical reasons for expecting a new and higher kind of life as intended for the human family. Innumerable analogies, gathered from the processes of the vegetable and animal world, illustrate and corroborate this expectation ; while the irresistible impulses or instincts of the human mind, moral as well as intellectual, support it. Nevertheless, for religious purposes, and for bearing the stress of our moral principles, we must always choose to rely upon the direct testimony of the inspired writers. Our faith and hope rest upon the affirmation of heaven itself ; not upon the soundness of philosophical speculations, or even demonstrations, if such could be obtained. It is not as theorists, but

as believers, that we look for another life."

The Author of "Primeval Man Unveiled" says:—"Up to the time of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, a mysterious silence is maintained in Scripture as to the state of the saved. But it is otherwise in regard to those who die in the Lord now, because we have positive assurance that at death the spirits of believers go to Christ in heaven, so that when they are absent from the body they are present with the Lord. Whatever darkness, therefore, rested on this matter before the work of Christ was completed, life and immortality have now been brought to light through the Gospel."

Speaking of the "Light of the Sun of Righteousness," Dean Stanley in "Light in a Dark Place" says:—"It

enlightens our life, it enlightens the valley of the shadow of death. Above all, it enlightens the dark world which lies beyond death—the world of the grave.”

And in order that we may understand how much we owe to this light, he gives an account of a teacher coming into the North 1200 years ago. He tells us that Edwin, the powerful king of that part of Great Britain, “called his nobles and his priests around him. The question discussed was whether the missionary should be heard or not. The king was doubtful. The priests were doubtful. At last there rose an honest, straightforward man—a chieftain, a laird, as we should now call him—a ‘thane,’ as he was called in the language of those days, and spoke much as

follows :—‘ You know, O King, how, on a winter evening, when you are sitting at supper in your hall, with your company around you, when the night is dark and dreary, when the rain and the snow rages outside, when the hall inside is lighted and warmed with a blazing fire,—sometimes it happens that a sparrow flies into the bright hall out of the dark night, flies through the hall, and then flies out at the other end into the dark night again. We see him for a few moments, but we know not whence he came nor whither he goes in the blackness of the storm outside. So is the life of man. It appears for a short space in the warmth and brightness of this life, but what came before this life, or what is to follow this life, we know not. If, therefore, these new teachers can enlighten us as to the darkness

that went before, and the darkness that is to come after, let us hear what they have to teach us.' So spoke this old heathen seeker after light, and he prevailed on the king and the priests to hear the missionary ; and through him, under God, our fathers on both sides the Border received the knowledge of Christ."

He then goes on to remark, that "although we know more of the unseen world beyond the grave, of the two eternal states between which we stand, than did our heathen forefathers, yet still the question may well arise in our minds, as we look forward to that world to which we are all moving. What is it that we learn from the Gospel of Christ concerning that dark, awful, unknown night into which our souls must fly at last, out of the midst of all

the things now so dear, so familiar, so cheerful, so clear?"

Our Lord says:—"If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death;" meaning thereby, it is presumed, that the Christian after his departure is "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

Canon Kingsley in one of his Sermons remarks:—"Those who die in the fear of God, and in the faith of Christ, do not really taste death; to them there is no death, but only a change of place, a change of state; they pass at once into some new life, with all their powers, all their feelings unchanged; still the same living, thinking, active beings which they were here on earth."

A Physician in "Precious Stones of the Bible" says:—"We believe that if we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with Him, who is the Resurrection

and the Life. Though here we are in a body of sin and death, yet we know that the 'land of forgetfulness' must give up its dead, and resurrection must follow; and so we look forward to that better country which is an heavenly. But before we reach those heavenly shores, how needlessly do we fear to walk that last walk, along the valley of the shadow of death, and with what unreasonable timidity do we dread crossing the dark river."

The Rev. W. Morley Punshon in "Morning and Evening Blessings" says:—"Death to the Christian is but the time of greatest triumph, because the time of nearest home; just as autumnal tints are richest on the woodland, and the decaying forest trees wear gayest colours—as if, like so many Cæsars, they had gathered their imperial robes

about them so seemlily to die ; so the Christian has found often the strength most vigorous, and the peace the stillest and divinest, when the shadow gathered on the countenance, sympathetic with the other shadow, which had waited in the room. Be comforted, my brother, whom the thought of death hath oftentimes oppressed with a strange, heavy disquiet ; be comforted, God will be glorified in thy death, if thou but aim to glorify Him in thy life."

The Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod in " Good Words" says :—" The glorified saint is not ' unclothed,' but ' clothed upon.' He inhabits ' a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The future body is called a ' spiritual body,' to express, I presume, its pure and immortal essence ; for though it

will be somehow related to the present body, as the risen is related to sown grain, which has perished through corruption, it must be changed into a new and higher form. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.' 'We shall all be changed.' 'He shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His glorious body.' It is in this new body, once sown in weakness, corruption, and mortality, but raised at length in power, incorruption, and immortality, no more to suffer, and no more to die, that we shall tread upon the new earth, gaze on the new heavens, and walk in the paradise of our God."

In "A Roman Letter" in "Good Words" a similar idea is conveyed in verse. A mourner is represented as saying :—

"The grave is but a wardrobe where
The robes that clothe the saints are stored.

.
Then in the dawn of that bright day,
Each spirit shall resume its own ;
And these shall be the spotless robes
In which they stand around the throne."

The Author of "Primeval Man Unveiled" remarks :—" We are told that our resurrection bodies are to be like Christ's. ' Our mortal bodies shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body,' and ' we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' His entering the room where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, when the doors were shut, corresponds with the entry of the angel into the prison where Peter lay bound. His vanishing out of the disciples' sight corresponds with the vanishing of the angel from the sight of Gideon ; and his ascent into

heaven from the Mount of Olives corresponds with the ascent of the angel in the smoke of the sacrifice of Manoah. What a glorious prospect does this present of the future inheritance of the redeemed! with bodies possessed of angelic powers and immortality, and, like Gabriel, capable of passing from world to world, in the service of their Master, the whole Universe, in all its grandeur and beauty, is thrown open to them during the endless ages of eternity. How do our present attainments and opportunities sink into insignificance when compared with this! And how sad the case of those men of science, who, after having got a glimpse of the glories of creation, have to bid them an eternal adieu, when they lie down to die!"

The Rev. E. L. Hull in his

“Sermons” says :—“Death can do nothing to our fellowships but give them the perfection for which we vainly sigh here. They pass through to burial, to rise in the fairer colours of an eternal spring. The hands we grasped once, and for whose ‘vanished touch’ we wept in agony, shall be clasped again, in the assurance of an eternal brotherhood. The voices that grew still, and left a silence which seemed the very bitterness of death, shall be heard again, only purified from the notes of sorrow, and resonant with the praises of the Lamb. Yes! and those dying eyes, that seemed to watch you with a tenderness unspeakable, until they looked beyond your ken, and gazed for one strange moment on the vision of the spiritual world, shall gaze on you again, filled with the light of a

celestial beauty, and with a love that shall 'shed no tears.'"

The Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod in "Good Words" says:—"Not therefore with sadness, but with joy, I can turn from beholding the dead unmeaning eye of the lifeless body through which the noble mind once shone with mild intellectual lustre, and contemplate rather the same mind rising over the everlasting hills, amidst the fresh unsullied brightness of a new-born day, and advancing forever, without a cloud, amidst the endless glories of the upper sky."

The Rev. E. L. Hull in his "Sermons" says:—"Inheriting God we inherit all things. Here thought and language fail us. We know not what we shall be, but we know that the universe is our Father's house. Its many mansions,

many worlds, many domains of beauty and grandeur, which eye hath not seen, nor heart conceived, have been prepared for the conquering sons of God."

And he further says:—"As yet the veil is over us; we can only catch a faint gleam of the splendour of the inheritance. We are like men standing outside some mighty temple, seeing now and then the glory streaming through its gorgeous windows, and faintly hearing the music rolling through its dome. But soon the veil shall be lifted, and we shall 'know, even as also we are known.'"

CHAPTER III.

HEAVEN.

“O Jesus mine, Thou rest Divine,
Lead me to Sion’s height,
That I with all Thy ransomed ones
May walk with Thee in white !”

MANKIND, with almost childlike interest, have constantly longed, in some degree, to realise, while here on earth, what are the beauties and joys of Heaven.

In “The Better Land” we have a specimen of the delightful word painting of Mrs. Hemans on this subject, in a supposed dialogue between herself and child, as follows :—

"I hear thee speak of the better land ;
Thou callest its children a happy band ;
Mother ! oh where is that radiant shore ?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more ?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies dance through the myrtle
boughs ?—

Not there, not there, my child !

"Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies ?
Or 'midst the green islands on glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange bright birds on their starry wings,
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things ?—
Not there, not there, my child !

"Is it far away in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold ?
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand ?
Is it there, sweet mother, that better land ?—
Not there, not there, my child !

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy ;
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy ;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair,
Sorrow and death cannot enter there :

Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom ;
For beyond the grave and beyond the tomb ;—
It is there—it is there—my child !”

The ideas of a child of ten years, respecting Heaven, derived from the Bible, are embodied by her in the following verses :—

“That fair, fair land,
Where the angels stand,
Before the Redeemer’s throne,
Where the saints do sing,
And the harps do ring,
For He’s theirs, and they’re His own.

“That ever blue sky,
Where the flowers never die,
And the river of God flows so bright ;
Of the sun they’ve no need,
Nor the moon do they heed,
For the Lord He Himself is their light.

“Those white gates of pearl,
And that clear jasper wall,
And that pavement of shining gold,
Those mansions so blest,
Where the weary have rest,
In that City which never grows old.”

We find in Revelation a description of the wonderful precious stones which constitute the wall and foundations of the New Jerusalem, filling our minds with visions of magnificence and glory.

The beautiful jewels of this earth, which are so valuable and attractive, are found in small pieces, as if they were mere fragments of great and glorious precious stones, such as those which are thus described by Bernard, as belonging to the Heavenly City :—

“With jasper glow thy bulwarks,
Thy streets with emerald blaze,
The sardius and the topaz,
Unite in thee their rays.

“Thine ageless walls are bonded
With amethyst unpriced ;
The saints build up its fabric,
And the corner-stone is Christ.”

The Rev. Dr. Guthrie in “The Re-

ligion of Life" compares "the Church of the living God" to the diamond, as being "one," although like the diamond "it presents various aspects," for "there are differences of administration, but the same Lord."

And bearing upon this idea he says : — "Distinguished from other jewels that have but one colour, such as the fiery ruby, the milk-white pearl, the sapphire that borrows its tint from the sky, and the emerald from the sea, diamonds owe their beauty, brilliancy, and costly value to this; that they burn with many hues. Turned round they sparkle with shifting colours as the light flashes from their different faces. Still, though it appears in this variety of aspects, the diamond is one gem, 'pure and undefiled,' as a dew-drop distilled from the skies."

Heaven, as a place where the beauties of climate and nature are associated, is thus described by Dr. Watts :—

“There everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers ;
Death like a narrow sea divides
This heavenly land from ours.

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green ;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.’

‘The same ideas are thus beautifully expressed in Solomon’s Song :—

“Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away,
For, lo ! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ;
The flowers appear on the earth ;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ;
The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs,
And the vines with a tender grape give a good smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

A British poet, in beautiful language, also sets forth a similar character of

happiness, when speaking of the life of the cuckoo. He says :—

“ Sweet bird, thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear,
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year.”

In “ Songs of Eternal Life ” we have the following wonderful realisation of Heaven :—

“ O city beautiful ! Thy Light appears,—
The gates by grace set wide,—
The home for which through long, long exile years
My weary spirit sighed,—
The false and empty shadows,
The life of sin are past,—
God gives me mine inheritance,
Eternal life at last.

“ But who are they that come,—the glorious ones,
As stars along the way,—
A Royal Diadem of pleasant stones ?
My Lord's elect are they.
He sent them forth to meet me,
Where dark with mist of fears,
The land of gloom lay round me,
My distant land of tears.

“The Patriarchs and Saints of olden days,
The Christians all unknown,
Who bore the heat of persecution-blaze,
Or nameless cross alone,—
I see them crowned with glory,
And shining from afar,—
To them the Lord their Saviour,
Has given the Morning Star.”

The happiness of rest is often mentioned in the Bible. Thus Job, speaking of the state of sleep in death, says:—

“There the wicked cease from troubling ;
And there the weary are at rest.”

The Rev. J. Baldwin Brown in “Good Words” says :—“Is there any word written in the Bible which has been more fondly cherished, by hearts worn with the pain, and weary with the strain of life, through all Christian ages, than that brief but most pregnant sentence in the Epistle to the Hebrews,

‘There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God?’”

And Faber, expressing the idea in verse, tells us :—

“Rest comes at length ; though life be long and dreary,

The day must dawn, and darksome night be past ;
Faith’s journey ends in welcome to the weary,

And heaven, the heart’s true home, will come at last.”

So Mrs. Hemans in beautiful poetry says :—

“But rest, more sweet and still
Than ever night-fall gave,
Our yearning hearts shall fill,
In the world beyond the grave.

“There shall no tempest blow,
No scorching noontide heat ;
There shall be no more snow,
No weary wandering feet.

“So we lift our trusting eyes
From the hills our fathers trod,
To the quiet of the skies—
To the Sabbath of our God.”

In "Songs of Eternal Life" we read the following poetic and graphic description of the restful state of a Christian after death :—

" In Jesus' arms her soul doth rest,
In earth her ashes sweetly sleep—
Now heart to heart is warmly pressed,
In rest unutterably deep.
Her pain and grief have found an end,
In that sweet place of Christ her friend ;
She floats o'er heaven's tranquil sea—
The Lamb her light of endless day.
Our God hath wiped her tears away—
Hath healed her wondrously.

" She hath escaped from sin and strife,
Where she is they have never been ;
She hath received the Crown of Life,
She standeth as a bride and queen,
By Him who is our King of old,
In glorious raiment of wrought gold,
She sees His face in vision bright—
His deep love filling all her soul—
For evermore hath made her whole,
A light in the great Light.

"The child can see the Father's face,
Can love as none on earth can do ;
Can understand those words of grace—
 'Himself, the Father, loveth you.'
A fathomless abyss of peace,
An endless sea of blessedness,
Her spirit-eyes have looked upon ;
The Lord Almighty she hath seen—
She knows what heir of God may mean
 And joint-heir with His Son."



CHAPTER IV.

DYING EXPERIENCES.

“Oh, if my Lord would come and meet,
My soul should stretch her wings in haste ;
Fly fearless through death's iron gate
Nor feel the terrors as she past.

“Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on His breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there.”

THE Rev. C. H. Spurgeon in one of his Sermons makes the following remarks :—“Dying Christians, when the solemn hour approaches, and they are in the article of death—perhaps after they have been very much disturbed and afflicted—on a sudden a great still-

ness comes over them, like the softness of the Sabbath eve in some far off dell, where the hum of cities can never reach. There you look on the man: he is dying; there is something unearthly about him, and he begins to talk in a different style from that in which he had ever spoken before. 'Hark! did you not hear that?' 'No,' say you; 'I heard nothing. What was it?' 'I did,' says he; 'I thought I heard music sweeter than any I had ever listened to before. What can it be? Oh yes!' he says; 'yonder they are. There, there, there they are.' 'What are they?' you ask. 'I know not,' he replies; 'they seem to me to be the angels of God who have come to meet me.' You question the good man on some earthly topic. What is this? Does he really see those things, or is he dreaming? His reply

to the question on the earthly topic convinces you that he is still in his clear and natural senses, and in the full possession of them ; and when he has thus satisfied you of his sanity—‘ Yes, I see it!’ he exclaims ; ‘ O Glory, how bright thou art ; how sweet thou art ! I am dying—I feel that I am dying—it seems not like dying—I feel that I am but beginning to live ; heaven is coming down to me, and I am going up to it.’ I cannot repeat more of these sayings that have been uttered by God’s children ; they are something more than uninspired. I feel quite certain that many of those who die in the Lord see heaven before they get into it ; hear its melodies, and almost join in worship before they get there. It seems as if the Lord takes away the veil which hides from us the unseen ;

just as the spirit stands on the verge of eternity, sunlight streams into the eyes of dying saints; they have climbed the top of Nebo, and viewed the landscape o'er."

In another of his Sermons, he further says :—

"I am convinced from my own experience, that, not to a few, but to many dying saints, something more is given than the mere realisation of faith. Much more frequently than we suppose supernatural glimpses of the divine splendour are vouchsafed to saints in the hour of their departure. I have heard persons, comparatively uninstructed, and certainly unimaginative, speak of what they have seen in their last hour, in such a way, that I am certain they never borrowed their expressions from books, but must have

seen what they described. There has been a freshness about their descriptions, which has convinced me they did see what they assured me they beheld; and, moreover, the joy which resulted from it, the acquiescence in the divine will, the patience with which they have borne suffering, have gone far to prove that they were not under the influence of an idle imagination, but were really enabled to look within the veil. The flesh in its weakness becomes, if I may so say, a rarefied medium. The mists are blown away, the obscuring veil grows thinner, and through the thin places and the rents, the heavenly glory shines. Oh, how little will a man fear death, or care about pain, if he expects to breathe out his soul on a better Pisgah than Moses ever climbed."

The poet Pope, in wonderful and

expressive language, represents "The Dying Christian" as saying to his soul :—

"Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh quit, this mortal frame ;
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying !
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife ;
And let me languish into life.

"Hark ! they whisper, angels say,
Sister spirit, come away.
What is this absorbs me quite,
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath ?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?

"The world recedes, it disappears ;
Heaven opens on my eyes ; my ears
With sounds seraphic ring.
Lend, lend your wings ! I mount, I fly !
O grave ! where is thy victory ?
O death ! where is thy sting ?"

M. Guizot, whose death seems to have been very gradual and quiet, appears to have experienced the feeling

that the world was gradually receding from him. In a letter from Val Richer it is said of him :—" His passage from this life to another was unmarked by moral or physical struggle. M. Guizot felt no pain, and suffered from no darkness of spirit. There were no flickerings of the vital flame. The spark of life gradually went out. There was a three weeks' spell of somnolence, with short periods of languid wakefulness, in which M. Guizot told those around him that he experienced the sensation felt by aërial travellers when their balloon rises from the ground. Each time he awoke earth appeared more distant. He had lost the interest which used to be so keen in politics, his country-seat, and his unfinished ' Child's History of France.' A vivid sense of the supernatural came upon him. ' His thoughts in this state,'

he said, ‘clustered round the daughter he had the misfortune to lose last May.’”

Dr. Nelson, an eminent American physician, who was long an infidel, but afterwards became a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, watched and recorded during a course of years the various circumstances attending man’s departure.

Some of the results of his observations and experiences are thus given by him in his work, called “Infidelity : its Cause and Cure.”

He says :—“ While attending medical lectures at Philadelphia, I heard from the lady with whom I boarded an account of certain individuals, who were dead, to all appearance, during the prevalence of the yellow fever in that city, and yet recovered. The fact

that they saw, or fancied they saw, things in the world of spirits, awakened my curiosity.

“She told me of one with whom she was acquainted, who was so confident of his discoveries, that he had seemingly thought of little else afterwards, and it had then been twenty-four years. These things appeared philosophically strange to me, for the following reasons :—

“First, those who from bleeding or from any other cause reach a state of *syncope*, or the ordinary fainting condition, think not at all, or are unable to remember any mental action. When they recover, it appears that the mind was suspended, or they were unable to recollect its operations. There are those who believe on either side of this question. Some contend for suspen-

sion ; others deny it, but say we never can recall thoughts formed while the mind is in that state, for reasons not yet understood. Secondly, those who, in approaching death, reach the first state of insensibility and recover from it, are unconscious of any mental activity, and have no thoughts which they can recall. Thirdly, if this is so, why then should those who had travelled further into the land of death, and had sunk deeper into the condition of bodily inaction, when recovered, be conscious of mental action, and remember thoughts more vivid than ever had flashed across their souls in the health of boyhood, under a vernal sun, and on a plain of flowers ?

“ After this I felt somewhat inclined to watch, when it became my business year after year to stand by the bed of

death. That which I saw was not calculated to protract and deepen the slumbers of infidelity, but rather to dispose towards a degree of restlessness, or, at least, to further observation. I knew that the circle of stupor, or insensibility, drawn around life, and through which all either pass, or seem to pass, who go out of life, was urged by some to prove that the mind could not exist unless it be in connection with organized matter. For the same reason, others have contended that our souls must sleep until the morning of the resurrection, when we shall regain our bodies. That which I witnessed for myself pushed me, willing or unwilling, in a different direction. Before I relate these facts, I must offer something which may illustrate to a certain extent the thoughts towards which they pointed.

“ If we were to stand on the edge of a very deep ditch or gulf, on the distant verge of which a curtain hangs which obstructs the view, we might feel a wish to know what is beyond it, or whether there is any light in that unseen land. Suppose we were to let down a ladder, protracted greatly in its length, and ask a bold adventurer to descend and make discoveries. He goes to the bottom, and then returns, telling us that there he could see nothing ; that all was total darkness. We might very naturally infer the absence of light there ; but if we concluded that his powers of vision had been annihilated, or that there could surely be no light in the land beyond the curtain, because, to reach that land, a very dark ravine must be crossed, it would have been weak reasoning ; so much so, that, if it contented us, we

must be easily satisfied. It gave me pain to notice many, nay, many physicians, who, on these very premises, or on something equally weak, were quieting themselves in the deduction that the soul sees no more after death. Suppose this adventurer descends again, and then ascends the other side so near the top that he can reach the curtain and slightly lift it. When he returns, he tells us that his vision had been suspended *totally* as before; but that he went nearer the distant land, and it was revived again; that, as the curtain was lifted, he saw brighter light than he had ever seen before. We would say to him, 'For a certain distance vision is suspended; but inaction is not loss of sight. Only travel on further and you will see again.' We can understand that any one might go

to the bottom of that ravine a thousand times ; he might remain there for days, and, if he went no further, he could tell on his return nothing of the unseen regions.

“Something like this was illustrated by the facts noted during many years’ employment in the medical profession. A few cases may be taken as examples.

“I was called to see a female who departed under an influence which causes the patient to faint again and again, more and still more profoundly, until life is extinct. When recovered from the first condition of syncope, she appeared as unconscious, or as destitute of activity of spirit, as others usually do. She sunk again and revived ; it was still the same. She fainted more profoundly still ; and, when awake again, she appeared as others usually do

who have no thoughts which they can recall. At length she appeared entirely gone. It did seem as though the struggle was for ever past. Her weeping relatives clasped their hands and exclaimed, 'She is dead !' but, unexpectedly she waked once more, and, glancing her eyes on one who sat near, exclaimed, 'Oh, Sarah, I was at an entirely new place !' and then sunk to remain insensible to the things of this world.

"Why she, like others in fainting, should have no thoughts which she could recall, when not so near death as she afterwards was when she had thought, I could not clearly explain. Why her greatest activity of mind appeared to happen during her nearest approach to the future world, and while so near that from that stage

scarcely any ever return who once reach it, seemed somewhat perplexing to me. I remembered that in the case recorded by Dr. Rush, where the man recovered who was to all appearance entirely dead, his activity of mind was unusual. He thought he heard and saw things unutterable. He did not know whether he was altogether dead or not. St. Paul says he was in a condition so near to death, that he could not tell whether he was out of the body or not; but that he heard things unutterable. I remember that Tennant, of New Jersey, and his friends, could not decide whether or not he had been out of the body; but he appeared to be so for some days, and thought his discoveries unutterable. The man who cuts his finger and faints, recovering speedily, has no thoughts, or remembers none;

he does not approach the distant edge of the ravine. These facts appear to me poorly calculated to advance the philosophical importance of one who has discovered from sleep, or from syncope, that there is no other existence, because this is all which we have seen.

“In the cases of those who, recovering from yellow fever, thought they had enjoyed intercourse with the world of spirits, they were individuals who had appeared to be dead.

“The following fact took place in recent days. Similar occurrences impressed me during years of observation. In the city of St. Louis, a female departed who had a rich portion of the comforts of Christianity. It was after some kind of spasm that was strong enough to have been the death struggle, that she said in a whisper, being unable

to speak aloud, to her young pastor, 'I had a sight of home, and I saw my Saviour.'

"There were others who, after wading as far as that which seemed to be the middle of the river, and returning, thought they had seen a different world, and that they had had an antepast of hell. But these cases we pass over ; and next look at the facts which point along the same road we have been travelling.

"I was surprised to find that the condition of mind in the case of those who were dying, and those who *thought* themselves dying, differed very widely. I had supposed that the joy or the grief of death originated from the fancy of the patient, one supposing himself very near to great happiness, and the other expecting speedy suffering. My discoveries seemed to overturn this

theory. Why should not the professor of religion, who believes himself dying when he really is not, rejoice as readily as when he is departing, if his joy is the offspring of expectation? Why should not the alarm of the scoffer who believes himself dying, and is not, be as uniform and as decisive as when he is in the river, if it comes of fancied evil or cowardly terrors? The same questions I asked myself again and again. I have no doubt that there is some strange reason connected with our natural disrelish for truth, which causes so many physicians, after seeing such facts so often, never to observe them. During twenty years of observation, I found the state of the soul belonging to the dying was uniformly and materially unlike that of those who only supposed themselves departing. This

is best made plain by noting cases which occurred.

“1. There was a man who believed himself converted, and his friends, judging from his walk, hoped with him. He was seized with disease, and believed himself within a few paces of the gate of futurity. He felt no joy, his mind was dark and his soul clouded. His exercises were painful, and the opposite of every enjoyment. He was not dying. He recovered. He had not been in the death-stream. After this he was taken ill again. He believed himself dying, and he was not mistaken. All was peace, serenity, hope, triumph.

“2. There was a man who mocked at holy things. He became seriously diseased, and supposed himself sinking into the death slumber. He was not

frightened. His fortitude and his composure were his pride, and the boast of his friends. The undaunted firmness with which he could enter futurity was spoken of exultingly. It was a mistake. He was not in the condition of dissolution. His soul never had been on the line between two worlds. After this he was taken ill again. He supposed as before that he was entering the next state, and he really was ; but his soul seemed to feel a different atmosphere. The horrors of these scenes have been often described, and are often seen. I need not endeavour to picture such a departure here. The only difficulty in which I was thrown by such cases was, ‘Why was he not thus agonized before, when he thought himself departing? Can it be possible that we can stand so precisely on the

dividing line, that the gale from both this and the coming world may blow upon our cheek? Can we have a taste of the exercises of the next territory before we enter it?' When I attempted to account for this on the simple ground of bravery and cowardice, I was met by the two following facts:—

“First, I have known those—the cases are not unfrequent—who were brave, who had stood unflinching in battle’s whirlpool. They had resolved never to disgrace their system of unbelief by a trembling death. They had called to Christians in the tone of resolve, saying, ‘I can die as coolly as you can.’ I had seen those die from whom entire firmness might fairly be expected. I had heard groans, even if the teeth were clenched for fear of complaint,

such as I never wish to hear again ; and I had looked into countenances, such as I hope never to see again.

“ Again, I had seen cowards die. I had seen those depart who were naturally timid, who expected themselves to meet death with fright and alarm. I had heard such, as it were, sing before Jordan was half forded. I had seen faces where, paled as they were, I beheld more celestial triumph than I had ever witnessed anywhere else. In that voice there was a sweetness, and in that eye there was a glory, which I never could have fancied in the death-spasms, if I had not been near.

“ The condition of the soul when the death-stream is entered is not the same with that which it often becomes when it is almost passed. The brave man who steps upon the ladder across the

dark ravine, with eye undaunted and haughty spirit, changes fearfully, in many cases, when he comes near enough to the curtain to lift it. The Christian who goes down the ladder pale and disconsolate, oftentimes starts with exultation and tries to burst into a song, when almost across.

“A revolutionary officer, wounded at the battle of Germantown, was praised for his patriotism. The war ended, but he continued still to fight, in a different way, under the banner of One whom he called the Captain of his salvation. The applause of man never made him too proud to talk of the Man of Calvary. The hurry of life's driving pursuits could not consume all his time, or make him forget to kneel by the side of his consort, in the circle of his children,

and anticipate a happy meeting in a more quiet clime.

“To abbreviate this history, his life was such that those who knew him believed, if any one ever did die happily, this man would be one of that class. I saw him when the time arrived. He said to those around him, ‘I am not as happy as I could wish, nor as I had expected. I cannot say that I distrust my Saviour, for I know in whom I have believed; but I have not that pleasing readiness to depart which I had looked for.’ This distressed his relatives beyond expression. His friends were greatly pained, for they had looked for triumph. His departure was very slow, and still his language was, ‘I have no exhilaration or delightful readiness in my travel.’ The weeping circle pressed around him.

Another hour passed. His hands and his feet became entirely cold. The feeling of heart remained the same. Another hour passes, and his vision has grown dim, but the state of his soul is unchanged. His daughter seemed as though her body could not sustain her anguish of spirit, if her father should cross the valley before the cloud passed from his sun. Before his hearing vanished, she made an agreement with him that at any stage as he travelled on, if he had a discovery of advancing glory, or a foretaste of heavenly delight, he should give her a certain token with his hand ; his hands he could still move, cold as they were. She sat holding his hand hour after hour. In addition to his sight, his hearing at length failed. After a time he appeared almost unconscious of anything, and

the obstructed breathing peculiar to death was advanced near its termination, when he gave the token to his pale, but now joyous daughter; and the expressive flash of exultation was seen to spread itself through the stiffening muscles of his face. When his child asked him to give a signal if he had any happy view of heavenly light, with the feelings and opinions I once owned I could have asked, 'Do you suppose that the increase of the death-chill will add to his happiness? Are you to expect, that as his eyesight leaves, and as his hearing becomes confused, and his breathing convulsed, and as he sinks into that cold, fainting, sickening condition of pallid death, his exultation is to commence?'

"It did then commence. Then is the time when many who enter the dark

valley cheerless, begin to see something that transports ; but some are too low to tell of it, and their friends think they departed under a cloud, when they really did not. It is at this stage of the journey that the enemy of God, who started with look of defiance and words of pride, seems to meet with that which alters his views and expectations ; but he cannot tell it, for his tongue can no longer move.

“ My attention was awakened very much by observing the *dying fancies* of the servants of this world, differing with such characteristic singularity from the fancies of the departing Christian. It is no uncommon thing for those who die to believe they see, or hear, or feel that which appears only fancy to bystanders. Their friends believe that it is the overturning of

their intellect. I am not about to enter into the discussion of the question, whether it is or is not always fancy. Some attribute it to more than fancy ; but inasmuch as in many instances the mind is deranged while its habitation is falling into ruins, and inasmuch as it is the common belief that it is only imagination of which I am writing, we will look at it under the name of fancy.

“The fanciful views of the dying servants of sin, and of the devoted friends of Christ, were strangely different as far as my observation extended. One who had been an entire sensualist and a mocker at religion, while dying, appeared in his senses in all but one thing. ‘Take that black man from the room,’ said he. He was answered that there was none in the room. He

replied, 'There he is, standing near the window. His presence is very irksome to me, take him out.' After a time, again and again his call was, 'Will no one remove him? There he is; surely some one will take him away.'

"I was mentioning to another physician my surprise that he should have been so much distressed even if there had been many blacks in the room, for he had been waited on by them day and night for many years; and also my wonder that the mind had not been diseased in some other respect, when he told me the names of two others, his patients, men of similar lives, who were tormented with the same fancy, and in the same way, while dying.

"A young female, who called the Man of Calvary her greatest friend, was,

when dying, in her senses in all but one particular. 'Mother,' she would say, pointing in a certain direction, 'do you see those beautiful creatures?' Her mother would answer, 'No; there is no one there, my dear.' She would reply, 'Well, that is strange. I never saw such countenances and such attire. My eye never rested on anything so lovely.' 'Oh,' says one, 'this is all imagination, and the notions of a mind collapsing; wherefore tell of it?' My answer is, that I am not about to dispute, or to deny that it is fancy; but the fancies differ in features and in texture. Some in their derangement call out, 'Catch me, I am sinking; hold me, I am falling;' others say, 'Do you hear that music? Oh, were ever notes so celestial!' This kind of notes, and these classes of fancies,

belonged to different classes of individuals, and *who they were*, was the item which attracted my wonder."



CHAPTER V.

REMARKABLE TESTIMONIES.

“Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o’er,
Nor Jordan’s streams, nor death’s cold flood
Should fright us from the shore.”

IN the Gospel according to St. John, an account is given of the great impression made upon the mind of Nathanael, when he knew he had been seen by Christ “under the fig-tree,” and which caused him to exclaim, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel!” We are told that “Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee I

saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

This saying gives additional interest to the wonderful account of the death of the first martyr Stephen, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. It appears that he was "a man full of faith and power," and "did great wonders and miracles among the people." Some of those of the synagogue, who were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake, "set up false witnesses," who charged him with speaking "blasphemous words." About this time a remarkable change seems to have taken place in the expression

of his countenance, for it is stated, " All that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

He was then permitted to answer to the accusation of blasphemy, and he did this so effectually, that " they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth."

" But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a

young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And, when he had said this, he fell asleep."

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon in one of his Sermons remarks:—"That this model departure, which is given in Scripture as a type of Christian deaths, has this for its ensign, that Christ was visible; and such shall be the character of our departure, if through faith we are one with Christ, therefore let us not fear."

The Apostle Paul records in his Epistle to Timothy, his own state of mind, when he calmly contemplated the prospect of death. He says:—"I

am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

It is always most delightful to those who witness the departure of Christian friends, to be able to realize their blessed and happy condition, as evidenced by their experience in the hour of death. Thus the Author of "A Light for the Line" gives a most interesting account of the death of Thomas Ward. This young man, who for some time had led a consistent Christian life, had his arm wrenched

off in a railway accident. Although his symptoms were favourable at first, his wound inflamed and he died.

A short time before his death he was in great agony of mind, as he thought that his Saviour had forsaken him. He poured out his soul in the most fervent prayer, and his friends prayed by his bedside, after which, as one of them says, "For a moment I waited, and turning my eyes towards the dying man, 'beheld his face,' as it is written of the first martyr, 'as it were the face of an angel.' A glory shed over and around it, and was shining through those dying eyes with surpassing splendour."

"Words were now breathed by his lips, yet too faint for human ear to catch. The pulse had ceased to beat, except by occasional flickering. At

length he said with a strong effort, 'Oh, do you see Him? I see Him now. He is here. He is near. He is with me. He is around me. He will never let me go. How could I ever doubt Him? He is the Saviour of sinners. He is *my* Saviour. Jesus is mine, and I am His. His blood has bought me. I never knew what He is till now. Oh! tell them all to come to Him, to come *Now*. Tell every man you meet. Christ for every man! I say;' and his mellow voice rang through the room, '*Jesus Christ for every man.*'"

"He paused for breath, then gently added—'My blessed, blessed Saviour! World without end. Amen. Blessed, blessed Jesus.' These were his last words. The glorious light still shone about his face; and as the clock struck

one, on the Sabbath morning, he entered into life eternal."

The Rev. Augustus M. Toplady died in the year 1778, at the age of thirty-seven. Shortly after this, a small narrative was published, comprising some of his observations and remarks, committed to writing, at the time, by a few persons who were present at his last illness.

The following particulars are taken from "Christian Biography:"—

"When he drew near his end, he said, waking from a slumber, 'Oh, what delights! who can fathom the joys of the third heaven.' And, a little before his departure, he was blessing and praising God for continuing to him his understanding in clearness; but, added he in a rapture, 'for what is most of all, His abiding presence, and the shining of

His love upon my soul. The sky,' says he, 'is clear ; there is no cloud. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly !'

"Within an hour of his death he called his friends and his servants, and asked them if they could give him up ; and upon their answering in the affirmative—since it pleased the Lord to be so gracious to him—he replied, 'Oh, what a blessing it is you are made willing to give me up into the hands of my dear Redeemer, and to take part with me ! It will not be long before God takes me ; for no mortal man can live (bursting, while he said it, into tears of joy) after the glories which God has manifested to my soul. Soon after this he closed his eyes, and found, as Milton finely expresses it—

' A death-like sleep,
A gentle wasting to immortal life.'"

A remarkable account of the "Last Days of the Rev. Dr. Payson" is given in "Christian Biography." He was pastor of a church in Portland, Maine, North America, where he died, October 22, 1827, aged forty-four.

"During much of the last year of his life he suffered the most severe bodily anguish. His right arm and left side lost all power of motion, and the flesh became insensible to external applications, while internally he experienced a sensation of burning, which he compared to a stream of liquid fire poured through his bones. He continued a part of his public ministrations for some months after this attack. On the 19th of September 1827, he dictated the following letter to his sister:—

" "Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this

letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as He approached ; and now He fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun ; exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness.

“ ‘A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants. I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion. But why do I speak thus of myself and my feelings? why not speak only of our God and Redeemer? It is because I know not what to say. When I would speak of them, my words are all swallowed up. I can only tell you what effects their presence produces, and even of these I can tell you but very little. O my sister, my sister! could you but know what awaits the Christian; could you only know so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing, and even leaping for joy! Labours, trials, troubles would be nothing: you would rejoice in afflictions, and glory in tribulations; and, like Paul and Silas, sing

God's praises in the darkest night, and in the deepest dungeon. You have known a little of my trials and conflicts, and know that they have been neither few nor small ; and I hope this glorious termination of them will serve to strengthen your faith, and elevate your hope.'

" On September 23d, he said, ' Last night I had a full clear view of death, as the king of terrors ; how he comes and crowds the poor sinner to the very verge of the precipice of destruction, and then pushes him down headlong ! But I felt that I had nothing to do with this ; and I loved to sit like an infant at the feet of Christ, who saved me from this fate. I felt that death was disarmed of all its terrors ; all he could do would be to touch me, and let my soul loose to go to my Saviour.'

“He directed invitations to be given from the pulpit to all the members of his congregation to visit him in classes. To the heads of families he said :—

“‘It has often been remarked, that people who have been into the other world cannot come back to tell us what they have seen ; but I am so near the eternal world, that I can see almost as clearly as if I were there ; and I see enough to satisfy myself, at least, of the truth of the doctrines which I have preached. I do not know that I should feel at all surer had I been really there. It is always interesting to see others in a situation in which we know that we must shortly be placed ourselves ; and we all know that we must die. And how melancholy is it to see a poor creature, when, after an alternation of hopes and fears, he finds that his

disease is mortal, and death comes to tear him away from everything he loves, and drives him to the very verge of the precipice of destruction, and then thrusts him down headlong—there he is, cast into an unknown world; no friend, no Saviour to receive him! Oh, how different is this from the state of a man who is prepared to die! He is not obliged to move reluctantly along; but the other world comes like a great magnet, to draw him away from this; and he knows that he is going to enjoy (and not only knows, but begins to taste it) perfect happiness; for ever and ever; for ever and ever!’

“He said to the young men of his congregation, assembled in his chamber:—‘My young friends, you will all one day be obliged to embark on the same voyage on which I am

just embarking; and as it has been my especial employment, during my past life, to recommend to you a Pilot to guide you through this voyage, I wished to tell you what a precious Pilot He is, that you may be induced to choose Him for yours. I felt desirous that you might see that the religion I have preached can support me in death. You know that I have many ties which bind me to earth; a family to whom I am strongly attached, and a people whom I love almost as well; but the other world acts like a much stronger magnet, and draws my heart away from this.

“ ‘Death comes every night, and stands by my bed-side in the form of terrible convulsions, every one of which threatens to separate the soul from the body. These continue to grow

worse and worse, until every bone is almost dislocated with pain, leaving me with the certainty that I shall have it all to endure again the next night. Yet, while my body is thus tortured, the soul is perfectly, perfectly happy and peaceful, more happy than I can possibly express to you. I lie here, and feel these convulsions extending higher and higher; but my soul is filled with joy unspeakable. I seem to swim in a flood of glory which God pours down upon me. And I know, I know, that my happiness is but begun; I cannot doubt that it will last for ever.

“‘And now, standing, as I do, on the ridge which separates the two worlds; feeling what intense happiness or misery the soul is capable of sustaining; judging of your capaci-

ties by my own, and believing that those capacities will be filled to the very brim with joy or wretchedness for ever; can it be wondered at, that my heart yearns over you, my children, that you may choose life and not death? Is it to be wondered at that I long to present every one of you with a full cup of happiness, and see you drink it; and that I long to have you make the same choice which I made, and from which springs all my happiness?’

“While speaking of the rapturous views he had of the heavenly world, he was asked if it did not seem almost like the clear light of vision, rather than that of faith. ‘Oh!’ he replied, ‘I don’t know, it is too much for the poor eyes of my soul to bear! they are almost blinded with the ex-

cessive brightness. All I want is to be a mirror, to reflect some of those rays to those around me.'

"A friend remarked, 'I presume it is no longer incredible to you, if ever it was, that martyrs should rejoice and praise God in the flames and on the rack.' 'No,' said he, 'I can easily believe it. I have suffered twenty times—yes, to speak within bounds—twenty times as much as I could in being burnt at the stake, while my joy in God so abounded as to render my sufferings not only tolerable, but welcome. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.'

"At another time he said, 'Hitherto I have viewed God as a fixed star, bright indeed, but often intercepted by

clouds ; but now he is coming nearer and nearer, and spreads into a Sun so vast and glorious, that the sight is too dazzling for flesh and blood to sustain. I see clearly that all these same glorious and dazzling perfections, which now only serve to kindle my affections into a flame, and to melt down my soul into the same blessed image, would burn and scorch me like a consuming fire, if I were an impenitent sinner.'

"On October 21st, his last agony commenced. This holy man, who had habitually said of his racking pains, 'These are God's arrows, but they are all sharpened with love'—and who, in the extremity of suffering, had been accustomed to repeat, as a favourite expression, 'I will bless the Lord at all times'—had yet the 'dying strife' to encounter.

“Several members of his church were collected at his bedside. He smiled on them all, but said little, as his power of utterance had nearly failed. Once he exclaimed, ‘Peace ! peace ! Victory ! victory !’

“On Monday morning, October 22d, his dying agonies returned, in all their extremity. With the greatest difficulty he was enabled to articulate the words, ‘Faith and patience.’ After this, there was no visible indication of the return of his sufferings ; he gradually sank away, till about the going down of the sun, when his happy spirit was set at liberty to be with Christ.”

CHAPTER VI.

JOHN BUNYAN'S DESCRIPTIONS.

"Fainting, dying, now mine eyes I close,
My weary head upon Thy bosom, Lord, repose
Thou wilt not leave nor fail me
Till my short race is run ;
Thanks be to God
The glorious victory's won !
Dying, I can sing,
Where, O death's thy sting ?
Salvation's perfect work is done !"

JOHN BUNYAN in "The Pilgrim's Progress" describes the deaths of Christians, of a great variety of temperament and character. Thus, Great-heart says of Fearing :—

"But when he was come to the entrance of the Valley of the Shadow of

Death, I thought I should have lost my man; not for that he had any inclination to go back; that he always abhorred; but he was ready to die for fear. 'Oh, the hobgoblins will have me! Oh, the hobgoblins will have me!' cried he, and I could not beat him out of it. He made such a noise and such an outcry here, that had they but heard him, it was enough to encourage them to come and fall upon us.

"But this I took very great notice of, that this Valley was as quiet when we went through it, as ever I knew it before or since. I suppose those enemies here had now a special check from our Lord, and a command not to meddle until Mr. Fearing had passed over it.

"It would be tedious to tell you of

all, we will therefore only mention a passage or two more. When he was come to Vanity Fair, I thought he would have fought with all the men in the Fair. I feared that we should have been both knocked on the head, so hot was he against their fooleries. Upon the Enchanted Ground he was very wakeful. But when he was come at the river where was no bridge, there again he was in a heavy case. 'Now, now,' he said, 'he should be drowned for ever, and so never see that face with comfort, that he had come so many miles to behold.'

"And here also I took notice of what was very remarkable, the water of that river was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life, so he went over at last, not much above wetshod.

When he was going up to the gate, I began to take leave of him, and to wish him a good reception above. So he said, 'I shall, I shall.' Then parted we asunder, and I saw him no more.

"*Honest*.—Then it seems he was well at last ?

"*Great-heart*.—Yes, yes, I never had a doubt about him. He was a man of a choice spirit, only he was always kept very low, and that made his life so burdensome to himself, and so troublesome to others. (Psa. lxxxviii.) He was, above many, tender of sin ; he was so afraid of doing injuries to others, that he often would deny himself of that which was lawful, because he would not offend. (Rom. xiv. 21 ; 1 Cor. viii. 13.)

"*Honest*.—But what should be the

reason that such a good man should be all his days so much in the dark ?

“*Great-heart*.—There are two sorts of reasons for it. One is, the wise God will have it so ; some must pipe, and some must weep. (Matt. xi. 16, 17.) Now Mr. Fearing was one that played upon the bass. He and his fellows sound the sackbut, whose notes are more doleful than the notes of other music are, though indeed some say the bass is the ground of music. And, for my part, I care not at all for that profession which begins not in heaviness of mind. The first string that the musician usually touches is the bass, when he intends to put all in tune. God also plays upon this string first, when He sets the soul in tune for Himself. Only there was the imperfection of Mr. Fearing ; he could play upon no

other music but this, till towards his latter end.

“*Honest.*—He was a very zealous man, as one may see by the relation which you have given of him. Difficulty, lions, or Vanity Fair, he feared not at all; it was only sin, death, and hell, that were to him a terror, because he had some doubts about his interest in that celestial country.

“*Great-heart.*—You say right; those were the things that were his troubles: and they, as you have well observed, arose from the weakness of his mind thereabout, not from weakness of spirit as to the practical part of a pilgrim’s life. I dare believe that, as the proverb is, he could have bit a firebrand, had it stood in his way; but the things with which he was oppressed, no man ever yet could shake off with ease.”

We have also an account of the death of Christiana, and various other characters, as follows:—

“Now the day drew on that Christiana must be gone. So the road was full of people to see her take her journey. But, behold, all the banks beyond the river were full of horses and chariots, which were come down from above to accompany her to the city gate. So she came forth, and entered the river, with a beckon of farewell to those that followed her. The last words that she was heard to say were, ‘I come, Lord, to be with Thee, and bless Thee!’ So her children and friends returned to their places, for those that waited for Christiana had carried her out of their sight. So she went and called, and entered in at the gate with all the ceremonies

of joy that her husband Christian had entered with before her. At her departure the children wept. But Mr. Great-heart and Mr. Valiant played upon the well-tuned cymbal and harp for joy. So all departed to their respective places.

“In process of time, there came a post to the town again, and his business was with Mr. Ready-to-halt. So he inquired him out, and said, ‘I am come from Him whom thou hast loved and followed, though upon crutches; and my message is to tell thee, that He expects thee at His table to sup with Him in His kingdom, the next day after Easter; wherefore prepare thyself for this journey.’ Then he also gave him a token that he was a true messenger, saying, ‘I have broken thy

golden bowl, and loosed thy silver cord' (Eccles. xii. 6).

"After this, Mr. Ready-to-halt called for his fellow-pilgrims, and told them, saying, 'I am sent for, and God shall surely visit you also.' So he desired Mr. Valiant to make his will. And because he had nothing to bequeath to them that should survive him but his crutches, and his good wishes, therefore thus he said, 'These crutches I bequeath to my son, that shall tread in my steps, with a hundred warm wishes that he may prove better than I have been.' Then he thanked Mr. Great-heart for his conduct and kindness, and so addressed himself to his journey. When he came to the brink of the river he said, 'Now I shall have no more need of these crutches, since yonder are chariots and horses for me

to ride on.' The last words he was heard to say were, 'Welcome life!' So he went his way.

"After this, Mr. Feeble-mind had tidings brought him that the post sounded his horn at his chamber-door. Then he came in, and told him, saying, 'I am come to tell thee that thy Master hath need of thee, and that in a very little time thou must behold His face in brightness. And take this as a token of the truth of my message: 'Those that look out at the windows shall be darkened' (Eccles. xii. 3). Then Mr. Feeble-mind called for his friends, and told them what errand had been brought unto him, and what token he had received of the truth of the message. Then he said, 'Since I have nothing to bequeath to any, to what purpose should I make a will?

As for my feeble mind, that I will leave behind me, for that I shall have no need of in the place whither I go, nor is it worth bestowing upon the poorest pilgrims, wherefore when I am gone, I desire that you, Mr. Valiant, would bury it in a dunghill.' This done, and the day being come on which he was to depart, he entered the river as the rest. His last words were, 'Hold out, faith and patience!' So he went over to the other side.

"When days had many of them passed away, Mr. Despondency was sent for; for a post was come, and brought this message to him: 'Trembling man! these are to summon thee to be ready with the King by the next Lord's day, to shout for joy for thy deliverance from all thy doubtings.' And, said the messenger, that my message is true,

take this for proof: 'So He gave him a grasshopper to be a burden unto him' (Eccles. xii. 5).

"Now Mr. Despondency's daughter, whose name was Much-afraid, said, when she heard what was done, that she would go with her father. Then Mr. Despondency said to his friends, 'Myself and my daughter, you know what we have been, and how troublesomely we have behaved ourselves in every company. My will and my daughter's is, that our desponds and slavish fears be by no man ever received, from the day of our departure for ever; for I know that after my death they will offer themselves to others. For to be plain with you, they are ghosts which we entertained when we first began to be pilgrims, and could never shake them off after;

and they will walk about, and seek entertainment of the pilgrims, but for our sakes shut the doors upon them.' When the time was come for them to depart, they went up to the brink of the river. The last words of Mr. Despondency were, 'Farewell, night; welcome, day!' His daughter went through the river singing, but no one could understand what she said.

"Then it came to pass awhile after, that there was a post in the town that inquired for Mr. Honest. So he came to the house where he was, and delivered to his hand these lines, 'Thou art commanded to be ready against this day' se'ennight, to present thyself before thy Lord, at His Father's house,' and for a token that my message is true: 'All the daughters of music shall be brought low' (Eccles. xxii. 4).

Then Mr. Honest called for his friends, and said unto them, 'I die, but shall make no will. As for my honesty, it shall go with me; let him that comes after be told of this.' When the day that he was to be gone was come, he addressed himself to go over the river. Now the river at that time overflowed its banks in some places; but Mr. Honest in his lifetime had spoken to one Good-conscience to meet him there, the which he also did, and lent him his hand, and so helped him over. The last words of Mr. Honest were, 'Grace reigns!' So he left the world.

"After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was sent for by a summons, by the same post as the other, and had this for a token that the summons was true: 'That his pitcher was broken at the fountain' (Eccles. xii. 6).

When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then said he, 'I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the troubles I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles, who will now be my rewarder.' When the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river side, into which as he went he said, 'Death, where is thy sting?' And as he went down deeper, he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' (1 Cor. xv. 55.) So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

“Then there came forth a summons for Mr. Standfast. This Mr. Standfast was he whom the pilgrims found upon his knees in the Enchanted Ground. And the post brought it him open in his hands; the contents whereof were, that he must prepare for a change of life, for his Master was not willing that he should be so far from him any longer. At this Mr. Standfast was put into a muse. ‘Nay,’ said the messenger, ‘you need not doubt the truth of my message; for here is a token of the truth thereof: ‘Thy wheel is broken at the cistern’ (Eccles. xii. 6).

“When Mr. Standfast had set things in order, and the time being come for him to haste him away, he also went down to the river. Now there was a great calm at that time in the river; wherefore Mr. Standfast, when he was

about half way in, stood awhile, and talked to his companions that had waited upon him thither. And he said, 'This river has been a terror to many ; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me ; but now methinks I stand easy, my foot is fixed upon that on which the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood while Israel went over Jordan. (Josh. iii. 17.) The waters indeed are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold ; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the convoy that wait for me on the other side, lie as a glowing coal at my heart. I see myself now at the end of my journey ; my toilsome days are ended. I am going to see that head which was crowned with thorns, and that face which was spit upon for me. I have formerly lived by hearsay and

faith ; but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with Him in whose company I delight myself. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of ; and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too. His name has been to me sweeter than all perfumes. His voice to me has been most sweet ; and His countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun. His words I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He has held me and hath kept me from mine iniquities ; yea, my steps have been strengthened in His way.'

"Now while he was thus in discourse, his countenance changed, his strong man bowed under him ; and after he had said, 'Take me, for I

come unto thee,' he ceased to be seen of them.

"But glorious it was to see how the upper region was filled with horses and chariots, with trumpeters and pipers, with singers and players on stringed instruments, to welcome the pilgrims as they went up, and followed one another in at the beautiful gate of the City."

The following is his description of the deaths of Christian and Hopeful:—

"Now I further saw, that betwixt them and the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over; and the river was very deep. At the sight therefore of this river, the pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them said, 'You must go through, or you cannot come at the gate.'

“The pilgrims then began to inquire if there was no other way to the gate. To which they answered, ‘Yes ; but there hath not any, save two, to wit, Enoch and Elijah, been permitted to tread that path since the foundation of the world, nor shall until the last trumpet shall sound.’ The pilgrims then, especially Christian, began to despond, and looked this way and that, but no way could be found by them by which they might escape the river. Then they asked the men if the waters were all of a depth. They said, ‘No ; yet they could not help them in that case ; for,’ said they, ‘you shall find it deeper or shallower as you believe in the King of the place.’

“They then addressed themselves to the water, and entering, Christian began to sink, and crying out to his

good friend Hopeful, he said, 'I sink in deep waters ; the billows go over my head, all His waves go over me. Selah.'

"Then said the other, 'Be of good cheer, my brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good.' Then said Christian, 'Ah, my friend, the sorrows of death have compassed me about ; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey.' And with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him. Also here he in a great measure lost his senses, so that he could neither remember nor orderly talk of any of those sweet refreshments that he had met with in the way of his pilgrimage. But all the words that he spoke still tended to discover that he had horror of mind, and heart-fears that he should die in that river, and never obtain

entrance in at the gate. Here also, as they that stood by perceived, he was much in the troublesome thoughts of the sins that he had committed, both since and before he began to be a pilgrim. It was also observed, that he was troubled with apparitions of hobgoblins and evil spirits; for ever and anon he would intimate so much by words.

“Hopeful therefore here had much ado to keep his brother’s head above water; yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then, ere awhile, he would rise up again half dead. Hopeful also would endeavour to comfort him, saying, ‘Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us;’ but Christian would answer, ‘It is you, it is you they wait for; you have been Hopeful ever since I knew you.’

'And so have you,' said he to Christian. 'Ah, brother,' said he, 'surely, if I was right, He would now arise to help me ; but for my sins He hath brought me into the snare, and hath left me.' Then said Hopeful, 'My brother, you have quite forgot the text where it is said of the wicked, "There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm ; they are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued like other men" (Psa. lxxiii. 4, 5). These troubles and distresses that you go through in these waters, are no sign that God hath forsaken you ; but are sent to try you, whether you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of His goodness, and live upon Him in your distresses.'

"Then I saw in my dream, that Christian was in a muse awhile. To

whom also Hopeful added these words, 'Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.' And with that, Christian brake out with a loud voice, 'Oh, I see Him again; and He tells me, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee"' (Isa. xliii. 2). Then they both took courage, and the enemy was after that as still as a stone, until they were gone over. Christian, therefore, presently found ground to stand upon, and so it followed that the rest of the river was but shallow. Thus they got over.

"Now, upon the bank of the river, on the other side, they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore, being come out of the river, they saluted them, saying, 'We are ministering spirits, sent forth

to minister for those that shall be heirs of salvation.' Thus they went towards the gate.

"Now you must note, that the City stood upon a mighty hill; but the pilgrims went up that hill with ease, because they had these two men to lead them up by the arms, they had likewise left their mortal garments behind them in the river; for though they went in with them, they came out without them. They therefore went up here with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the City was framed was higher than the clouds; they therefore went up through the regions of the air sweetly talking as they went, being comforted because they safely got over the river, and had such glorious companions to attend them.

“The talk that they had with the shining ones was about the glory of the place; who told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. ‘There,’ said they, ‘is the Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect’ (Heb. xii. 22-24). ‘You are going now,’ said they, ‘to the paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life, and eat of the never-fading fruits thereof; and when you come there, you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity’ (Rev. ii. 7; iii. 4, 5; xxii. 5). There you shall not see again such things as you saw when you were in the lower region upon the earth—to wit, sorrow, sickness, affliction, and death, ‘for the

former things are passed away' (Isa. lxxv. 16, 17). 'You are going now to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to the prophets, men that God hath taken away from the evil to come, and that are now resting upon their beds, each one walking in his righteousness.' The men then asked, 'What must we do in the holy place?' To whom it was answered, 'You must there receive the comfort of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow; you must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers, and tears, and sufferings for the King by the way' (Gal. vi. 7, 8). 'In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight and visions of the Holy One; for there you shall see Him as He is' (1 John iii. 2). 'There also you shall serve Him continually with

praise, with shouting and thanksgiving, whom you desired to serve in the world, though with much difficulty, because of the infirmity of your flesh. There your eyes shall be delighted with seeing, and your ears with hearing the pleasant voice of the Mighty One. There you shall enjoy your friends again that are gone thither before you ; and there you shall with joy receive even every one that follows into the holy place after you. There also you shall be clothed with glory and majesty, and put into an equipage fit to ride out with the King of Glory. When He shall come with sound of trumpet in the clouds, as upon the wings of the wind, you shall come with Him ; and when He shall sit upon the throne of judgment, you shall sit by Him ; yea, and when He shall pass

sentence upon all the workers of iniquity, let them be angels or men, you also shall have a voice in that judgment, because they were His and your enemies. Also, when He shall again return to the City, you shall go too with sound of trumpet, and be ever with Him' (1 Thess. iv. 13-17 ; Jude 14, 15 ; Dan. vii. 9, 10 ; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3).

"Now while they were thus drawing towards the gate, behold a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them ; by whom it was said by the other two shining ones, 'These are the men that have loved our Lord, when they were in the world, and they have left all for His holy name ; and He hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy.'

Then the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying, 'Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb' (Rev. xix. 9). There came out also at this time to meet them several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who, with melodious noises and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world ; and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet.

"This done, they compassed them round on every side ; some went before, some behind, and some on the right hand, some on the left (as it were to guard them through the upper regions), continually sounding as they went, with melodious noise, in notes on high ; so that the very sight was to them that

could behold it as if heaven itself was come down to meet them. Thus therefore they walked on together; and, as they walked, ever and anon these trumpeters, even with joyful sound, would, by mixing their music with looks and gestures, still signify to Christian and his brother how welcome they were into their company, and with what gladness they came to meet them. And now were these two men as it were in heaven, before they came at it, being swallowed up with the sight of angels, and with hearing of their melodious notes. Here also they had the City itself in view; and thought they heard all the bells therein to ring, to welcome them thereto. But, above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there with such company, and that for

ever and ever, oh, by what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed! —Thus they came up to the gate.

“Now when they were come up to the gate, there was written over in letters of gold, ‘BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY’ (Rev. xxii. 14).

“Then I saw in my dream that the shining men bid them call at the gate : the which when they did, some from above looked over the gate, to wit, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, etc., to whom it was said, ‘These pilgrims are come from the City of Destruction, for the love that they bear to the King of this place,’ and then the pilgrims gave in unto them each man his certificate, which they had received in the begin-

ning ; those therefore were carried in to the King, who, when He had read them, said, 'Where are the men !' To whom it was answered, 'They are standing without the gate.' The King then commanded to open the gate, 'that the righteous nation,' said He, 'that keepeth the truth, may enter in' (Isaiah xxvi. 2).

"Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate ; and lo, as they entered, they were transfigured ; and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them ; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the City rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, 'Enter ye into the joy of our

Lord' (Matt. xxv. 23). I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever' (Rev. v. 13).

"Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the City shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal.

"There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord!' and after that they shut up the gates: which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them."

CHAPTER VII.

THE TERRORS OF DEATH.

“There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath ;
Oh, what eternal horrors hang,
Around the second death !”

IN our intercourse with the world, we find that there are persons to be met with, who are ready to dispute every proposition, and to deny every statement made to them, except one, and that is, that sooner or later they must die ; yet, although this truth is assented to by all, most of people go carelessly on, living and acting as if they were to live here for ever.

But death comes at last, and then

they begin to feel, what Shakespeare describes as—

“The dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns.”

And medical men, clergymen, and others, are occasionally witnesses of very miserable death-bed scenes.

Mr. Moody in one of his Sermons says :—“ Very soon after the American war of 1861 broke out, it pleased God to call me to work amongst the wounded and the dying soldiers. Ah, then, I saw plenty of death ; and now I know there is a difference between the latter end of the righteous and the sinner. I have seen a man cursing, and calling upon God to damn his soul ; and I have seen him die with that oath on his lips—taken at his word ! Others I have seen cold and sullen, not caring

what became of their souls. Others in all the conscious agonies of a lost soul, that felt its days on earth ended, that its opportunities were past, and that it was not saved. I have heard the screams of despair from those who were without hope; and I have also witnessed scenes of calm, placid death, even of joyous triumphant departure to be with Christ, on the part of those who have their feet on the Rock of Ages."

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon in one of his Sermons says:—"There are many cases in which men seem to have seen frightful sights, and heard horrible sounds, before actually departing from the body. The death-beds of some wicked men have been so frightful, that even the nurses have been terrified. The wail of sorrow has been unapproachable and unparalleled."

It is not here intended to give particulars of the many distressing cases, which, from time to time, have been witnessed and recorded by various persons. But it has been considered advisable to select the following short narratives, as being of peculiar and melancholy interest.

The death of Napoleon is thus described in "Alison's History of Europe:"—"In the beginning of May, he became rapidly worse, and on the evening of the 5th, at five minutes before six, he breathed his last. A violent storm of wind and rain at the same time arose, which tore up the trees in the island by their roots; it was amidst the war of the elements that his soul departed. The howling of the wind seemed to recall to the dying conqueror the roar of battle, and his last words were,

—‘*Mon Dieu—La nation Française*
—*Tete d’armée.*’”

Mr. Chesterton in his “Revelations of Prison Life” gives the following remarkable account:—“A young man imprisoned under the name of Smith, for the unlawful possession of house-breaking implements, had been reduced by cholera to a state of irremediable collapse, and was fast sinking, when transfusion into the veins of tepid fluid was determined upon. This young fellow had already undergone a modified sentence of seven years’ transportation, and notwithstanding, again took up the practice of a burglar. His energies had become so subdued by the disease, that even transfusion appeared to hold out little hope of resuscitation. The action of the injected fluid, however, imparted instantaneous temporary

vigour, and, like the sudden flame of an expiring candle, the whole frame seemed to start into fitful agitation. The voice became clear and audible, though the mind still wandered. At this moment we had to mark a shocking but impressive exemplification of the ruling passion strong in death; for while all present consciousness seemed to forsake this prostrate man, the flickering energies of the soul worked with morbid excitement into a train of details incidental to a burglary. The contortions of the body were accompanied by such horrid ejaculations, as evidenced an absorbing interest in the imaginary task. Associates were named, and terms applicable to the police, the dark lantern, and the crow-bar were energetically enunciated; and, in such infamous dreaminess, this

guilty man gradually passed into Eternity."

Stephen Grellet in his Diary speaks as follows of the death of Tom Paine, which took place early in the present century:—"A few days previous to my leaving home, on my last religious visit, on hearing that he was ill, and in a very destitute condition, I went to see him, and found him in a very wretched state; for he had been so neglected and forsaken by his pretended friends, that the common attentions to a sick man had been withheld from him. The skin of his body was in some places worn off, which greatly increased his suffering. A nurse was provided for him, and some needful comforts were supplied. He was mostly in a state of stupor, but something that had passed between us had made

such an impression upon him, that, some days after my departure, he sent for me, and on being told I was gone from home, he sent for another friend. This induced a valuable friend (Mary Roscoe), who had resided in my family and continued at Greenwich during part of my absence, frequently to go and take him some little refreshment suitable for an invalid, furnished by a neighbour. Once when she was there, three of his deistical associates came to the door, and in a loud, unfeeling manner, said, 'Tom Paine, it is said you are turning Christian, but we hope you will die as you have lived,' and then went away. On which, turning to Mary Roscoe, he said, 'You see what miserable comforters they are.'

"Once he asked her if she had read any of his writings. And on being

told that she had read but very little of them, he inquired what she thought of them, adding, 'from such a one as you I expect a correct answer.' She told him that when very young his 'Age of Reason' was put into her hands, but that the more she read in it, the more dark and distressed she felt, and she threw the book into the fire. 'I wish all had done as you,' he replied; 'for if the devil had ever any agency in any work, he has had it in my writing that book.' When going to carry some refreshment, she repeatedly heard him uttering the language, 'O Lord! Lord God!' or, 'Lord Jesus! have mercy upon me!'"

Such was the closing scene of the life of Tom Paine, who had professed to be above the fear of death.

Barruel in his "History of the

French Clergy" describes the death of the infidel Voltaire, as "the most terrible that is ever recorded to have stricken an impious man." He tells us that D'Alembert, Diderot, and about twenty others of his infidel companions, who had beset his apartment during his last illness, never approached him but to witness their own ignominy; and often he would curse them, and exclaim, "Retire! it is you that have brought me to my present state! Begone! I could have done without you all; but you could not exist without me! And what a wretched glory have you procured me!"

"They could hear him, the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating or blaspheming that God whom he had conspired against; and in plaintive accents would he cry out,

‘O Christ! O Jesus Christ!’ and then complain that he was abandoned by God and man. The time was coming apace when he was to appear before the tribunal of Him he had blasphemed; and his physicians, particularly M. Tronchin, called in to administer relief, thunderstruck, retired, declaring the death of the impious man to be terrible indeed. The Mareschal de Richelieu fled from the bedside, declaring it to be a sight too terrible to be sustained; and M. Tronchin exclaimed, ‘That the furies of Orestes could give but a faint idea of those of Voltaire.’”

The Rev. J. Statham in his “Indian Recollections” says:—“I one night visited the chief mate of a ship who was dying in great agony of mind. When he knew who I was he eagerly stretched forth his hand, and, grasping mine with

great strength, said, 'Dear Sir, pray for me, pray for me.' I begged him to be calm, and said, 'I will pray for you, but let me beseech you not to waste your breath in vain exclamations and lamentations; pray for yourself. I will offer prayer, you must join with me.' 'Oh no, Sir, I cannot pray. My God! I never have prayed. No, Sir, I never shall pray. I feel I cannot; I cannot; I cannot; I am lost; I am lost; oh, that I had never been born!' I entreated him not to indulge in such a strain. I pointed out the value of the atoning blood of Christ; told him of the willingness of Christ to save the vilest of the vile; told him of the dying thief: but he would still cry out, 'Sir, this is not for me! I am lost! My father is in heaven. My mother will be there. I broke my father's heart. I despised

their prayers, their counsels, and their entreaties, and now I cannot pray, I cannot hope.' I began to read the Scriptures. He stopped me, saying, 'Pray for me directly.' I prayed; but, alas! every petition for mercy seemed only to aggravate his misery, and I could not proceed for his groans and cries. In this awful state he continued till about three o'clock in the morning, when he appeared to be more calm for about five minutes, during which period he seemed to listen very attentively to my words; but, just as I was kneeling down to pray again, he started up in his cot, and, looking fearfully around, grasped my hand with all the energy and convulsive power of a drowning man, and wildly shrieking and falling backwards, in indescribable agony, expired."

How true it is, that "he that, being

often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

For the time will come when God will say—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of My counsel; they despised all My reproof: therefore shall they eat of

the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

A lost soul is described by Shakespeare, as saying :—

" But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy warm
blood ;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
spheres ;
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine,
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood."

"The second death" is described in Revelation as the having part in "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." The rich man mentioned in the Gospel of St. Luke, who, after his death, found himself among the lost souls in Hades, is described by our Lord as cry-

ing and saying, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." He receives no pity, but only the warning, that "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

The author of "Primeval Man Unveiled" describes the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, as "drawn in lines of light and fire, that dazzle and terrify," and says, "The feast and the flames, the tongue and the finger, the water and the gulf, are all evidently borrowed from the things of time and sense; but they have their counterpart in realities, of which we are entirely ignorant."

Reader, you will say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But are you willing to live the life of the righteous? You are surrounded by the things of time and sense, and so you are tempted to put the world first, and Christ second. You say it is difficult to act otherwise, but remember that if Christianity is anything, it is everything.

Consider what Moses did. He "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." His faith enabled him to have "respect unto the recompense of the reward," and "to endure as seeing Him who is invisible."

Therefore, instead of becoming merely

an eminent and powerful Egyptian, he appears before us as one of the greatest and most honoured men that ever lived, with whom the Lord spake "mouth to mouth," and "whom the Lord knew face to face." He led God's chosen people to the borders of the Promised Land; and instead of his body after death being embalmed, and then perhaps eventually deposited in a museum, with the mummies of Egyptian kings and queens, we know that "the Lord buried him;" and more than 1500 years afterwards, he appeared to the astonished disciples at the time of the Transfiguration, in the company of Elias, talking with Jesus. You see, therefore, how Moses put Christ first, and the world second, and that he received a rich reward.

Reader, act like Moses. Live "by

faith" in Christ. Endure "as seeing Him who is invisible." Have "respect unto the recompense of the reward." See that you "live in the Spirit" and "walk in the Spirit," and so bring forth "the fruit of the Spirit."

Our Lord, however, does not keep back from the Christian the knowledge of the difficulties with which he will have to contend, and which he must be prepared to face, for He says :—

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me;" and also, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."

On this subject the Rev. Dr. Guthrie in "The Religion of Life" gives excellent advice when he says :—"Whatever be your cross, don't keep, with downcast head, looking at it; but

raise your eyes to the Crown that hangs yonder in heaven, beyond the grave. This is a Crown of Life. Immortals wear it, and it is itself immortal, 'A Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.'"

Thus you may adopt the beautiful language used in "Songs of Eternal Life," and pray:—

"Thou hidden Life of every soul—Thou Light
Of that mysterious inner world of thought,
Oh give us grace to follow Thee aright,
From cross, and toil, and sorrow, shrinking not."

And, giving thanks to God, you may be able to realize in your life the value of the exhortation of St. Paul, who says:—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

